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Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 AID-10 DODE-00 SCI-03 NSC-07 NSCE-00

L-02 DEAE-00 DRC-01 OMB-01 /065 W
---------- 126432
R 121215Z JUN 74
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4119
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

S E C R E T BANGKOK 9609

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, BM, TH
SUBJECT: BRIEFING FOR THAI OFFICIALS ON NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION EQUIPMENT FOR BURMA

REF: RANGOON 1493; RANGOON 1581; STATE 118813

1. DCM TODAY BRIEFLY OUTLINED OUR NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION ASSISTANCE TO BURMA FOR GENERAL POW SARASIN, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE RTG CENTRAL NARCOTICS BOARD. THE DCM NOTED THAT THIS MATTER HAD BEEN UNDER DISCUSSION OFF AND ON FOR SEVERAL YEARS. THE BURMESE AGAIN RAISED THE ISSUE DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS. WE HAVE NOTICED A RECENT STEP UP IN BURMESE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION ACTIVITIES, PARTICULARLY INTERDICTION OF LARGE CARAVANS, AND WISH TO ENCOURAGE THEIR ACTIONS BY ASSISTANCE. WE HAVE ABOUT COME TO THE POINT OF AN AGREEMENT ON FURNISHING HELICOPTERS TO INCREASE GUB MOBILITY FOR NARCOTICS INTERDICTION. WE PLAN TO SUPPLY ABOUT FIVE OR SIX AIRCRAFT IN THE FIRST YEAR AND ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT IN LATER YEARS IF THE BURMESE USE THE FIRST GROUP EFFECTIVELY AND WANT AND CAN USE ADDITIONAL PLANES. (RE RANGOON 1581, IF THE NUMBER OF HELICOPTERS TO BE PROVIDED BY DECEMBER 1975 IS AS MANY AS THE 12 RECOMMENDED,
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WE CAN INFORM THE RTG AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME.)

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2. THE DCM NOTED THAT THE HELICOPTERS WILL PROBABLY NOT BE DELIVERED UNTIL A YEAR AND A HALF FROM NOW BUT WE ARE INFORMING THE RTG NOW BECAUSE THE GUB AND RTG HAVE A COMMON INTEREST IN SUPPRESSING NARCOTICS TRAFFIC. HE ADDED THAT WE HAD JUST GIVEN THE RTG TWO HELICOPTERS AND HAD AGREED ON FIVE MORE. IF THE RTG COULD SHOW A CONSTRUCTIVE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION USE FOR MORE AIRCRAFT WE COULD CONSIDER SUPPLYING MORE. WE HOPE THAT OUR ASSISTANCE WILL ENCOURAGE THAI/BURMESE COOPERATION IN SUPPRESSING NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING IN BORDER AREAS.

3. POW DID NOT REACT. OUR GUESS WOULD BE HE HAD ALREADY HEARD ABOUT OUR PROPOSED AID TO THE GUB BUT WE NONETHELESS ARE GLAD WE WERE ABLE TO INFORM HIM OFFICIALLY. POW EXPRESSED THANKS FOR OUR RECENT ASSISTANCE TO RTG EFFORTS TO STALK A TRAWLER BELIEVED TO BE TRANSPORTING NARCOTICS. HE MENTIONED THAT HE EXPECTED TO TRAVEL TO BURMA IN LATE JUNE OR EARLY JULY. (EARLIER PLANS TO GO IN EARLY JUNE APPARENTLY FELL THROUGH BECAUSE DEPUTY INTERIOR MINISTER CHUMPORN CANNOT LEAVE DURING CURRENT TENSION RESULTING FROM TEXTILE STRIKE.)

4. POW THEN SWITCHED TO THE QUESTION OF U.S. OPIUM STRAW PRODUCTION. WHEN THE DCM REPLIED THAT THE DECISION TO GROW OPIUM ON A FEW ACRES IN THE U.S. TO TEST STRAW PRODUCTION HAD BEEN SUSPENDED, POW REMARKED THAT THAI, BURMESE AND LAO PRODUCTION IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE COULD BE USED TO MEET THE WORLD OPIUM SUPPLY IN COMING YEARS. THE DCM REPLIED THAT BURMESE ABILITY TO CONTROL PRODUCTION IN THE AREA WAS STILL IN QUESTION. LICIT PRODUCTION OF OPIUM WOULD RAISE QUESTION OF ENFORCEMENT AND SINGLE CONVENTION. ALSO THERE MIGHT BE A BREAKTHROUGH IN SYNTHETIC SUBSTITUTE FOR OPIUM. IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE AREA TO RETAIN A DEPENDENCE ON OPIUM FOR THEIR ECONOMY. POW REPLIED THAT HIS SUGGESTION WAS "JUST AN IDEA." HE SAID IT COULD NOT BE PURSUED IN ANY EVENT UNTIL GUB WAS ABLE TO CONTROL PRODUCTION.

5. THE DCM CLOSED THE CONVERSATION REMINDING POW THAT WE HAVE
INFORMED THE RTG OF OUR ASSISTANCE TO THE GUB BECAUSE
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OF OUR CLOSE COOPERATION IN NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION AND OUR JOINT INTEREST IN HELPING GUB INTERDICT TRAFFICKERS. WE REQUEST THAT THE RTG TREAT THIS INFORMATION AS CONFIDENTIAL. POW REPLIED AFFIRMATIVELY. THE DCM ALSO SUGGESTED THAT WE TELL GENERAL KRIANGSAK OF OUR ASSISTANCE TO THE BURMESE BECAUSE OF HIS INTEREST IN THE BORDER AREA, STRESSING THAT OUR ASSISTANCE TO THE BURMESE IS FOR NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION PURPOSES ONLY. POW AGREED TO OUR DIRECTLY INFORMING

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KRIANGSAK.

6. WE EXPECT TO BRIEF KRIANGSAK SHORTLY.
KINTNER

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